

Claim Amendments

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously presented) A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through a read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of:

- reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;
- monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;
- sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;
- obtaining optimum read technique data corresponding to the item;
- comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;
- providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique.

2. (Previously presented) A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through the read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of:

- reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;
- monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;
- sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;
- obtaining optimum read technique data;

comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;

providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique,

wherein the data reader includes a plurality of windows through which the symbol may be read, wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises determining through which window the symbol data was obtained.

3. (Previously presented) A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through the read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of:

reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;

monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;
sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;

obtaining optimum read technique data;
comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;

providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique,

wherein the data reader is a scanner that produces a plurality of scan lines to read the symbol data, wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises determining which scan line was used to read the symbol data.

4. (Previously presented) A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through the read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of:

reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;

monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;
sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;

obtaining optimum read technique data;

comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;

providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique,

wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises determining a distance from the data reader to the symbol when the symbol data was obtained.

5. (Previously presented) A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through the read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of:

reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;

monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;
sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;

obtaining optimum read technique data;

comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;

providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique,

wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises determining a length of time that the symbol was present in the read volume before the symbol was successfully read.

6. (Previously presented) A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through the read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of:

reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;

monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;

sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;

obtaining optimum read technique data;

comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;

providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique;

assembling a plurality of data pieces to obtain the symbol data,

wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises determining how many data pieces were assembled to obtain the symbol data.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of determining whether an EAS tag on the item has been deactivated.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the evaluation system comprises a PC-based training system.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the evaluation system comprises a POS terminal.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises displaying feedback data on a training system monitor.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises broadcasting an audio message.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises displaying feedback data in graphical form via a visual feedback indicator.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of recording the read technique data for subsequent analysis.

14. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of obtaining optimum read technique data comprises accessing a lookup table containing predetermined optimum read technique data for an item corresponding to the symbol data.

15. (Previously presented) A method of training a data reader operator, wherein the operator passes an item through the read volume of a data reader, comprising the steps of:

reading a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data and item identification data;

monitoring reading technique to obtain read technique data;
sending the item identification data and the read technique data to an evaluation system;

obtaining optimum read technique data;
comparing the read technique data to the optimum read technique data to determine an effectiveness of the reading technique;

providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the reading technique,

wherein the step of monitoring reading technique comprises detecting reading motion of the item via a plurality of triangulating cameras.

16. (Original) A method of scanning wherein an operator passes an item through the scan volume of a scanner while moving the item across a weigh scale integrated with the scanner, comprising the steps of

scanning a symbol on the item to obtain symbol data;
obtaining a dynamic weight of the item as the item is moved across the weigh scale;

obtaining optimum dynamic weight data for the item from a lookup table containing item weight data corresponding to the symbol data;

comparing the dynamic weight of the item to the optimum dynamic weight data to determine an extent of lifting performed by the operator;

providing data regarding the extent of lifting to at least one of a training system and a monitoring system.

17. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of scanning a plurality of items and calculating an average dynamic weight of the plurality of items.

18. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 17 further comprising the step of comparing the average dynamic weight of the plurality of items to a predetermined average dynamic weight standard.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 16 further comprising the step of monitoring scanning technique with the scanner to obtain scan technique data.

20. (Original) A method according to claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

producing a weight pulse having a duration equal to a length of time that the item is present on the weigh scale; and
determining a scan point within the weight pulse at which the item was scanned.

21. (Original) A method according to claim 20 further comprising the step of determining whether rescanning of the

item has occurred based on the position of the scan point within the weight pulse.

22. (Original) A method according to claim 20 further comprising the step of determining a rate at which the item is moved through the scan volume based on the duration of the weight pulse.

23. (Original) A method of training a scanner operator to use proper scanning technique, comprising the steps of

providing a pre-selected group of items having symbols encoded with symbol data;

scanning the symbols one at a time;

monitoring scanning technique to obtain scan technique data;

sending the scan technique data to a scanning evaluation system;

obtaining optimum scan technique data corresponding to the symbol data;

comparing the scan technique data to the optimum scan technique data to determine an effectiveness of the scanning technique;

providing feedback data indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique.

24. (Original) A method according to claim 23 further comprising the step of

moving an item across a weigh scale during scanning, wherein the step of monitoring scanning technique comprises

obtaining a dynamic weight of the item as the item is moved across the weigh scale.

25. (Original) A method according to claim 24 wherein the optimum scan technique data includes optimum dynamic weight data for the item.

26. (Original) A method according to claim 23 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises displaying the feedback data via a multimedia PC-based application.

27. (Original) A method according to claim 23 further comprising the step of recording the scan technique data.

28. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 23 further comprising the step of sending the scan technique data simultaneously with item identification data to the scanning evaluation system.

29. (Previously presented) A method of training a scanner operator to use proper scanning technique, comprising the steps of

providing a group of items having symbols encoded with symbol data;

scanning the symbols one at a time;

monitoring scanning technique to obtain scan technique data;

sending the scan technique data to a scanning evaluation system;

obtaining optimum scan technique data corresponding to the symbol data;

comparing the scan technique data to the optimum scan technique data to determine an effectiveness of the scanning technique;

providing feedback data indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique;

determining whether an EAS tag on an item has been deactivated to determine an effectiveness of the scanning technique.

30. canceled

31. (Currently amended) ~~The A data reading system of claim 30 further comprising~~ for reading symbols on items passed through a scan volume by an operator, comprising

a housing;

a data reader disposed in the housing for reading a symbol on an item being passed through the scan volume, and for obtaining symbol orientation data and symbol movement data during scanning;

a processor integrated with the data reader for processing the symbol orientation data and the symbol movement data, and for determining an effectiveness of a scanning technique;

feedback means in communication with the processor for providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique;

a weigh scale integrated with the data reader for obtaining a dynamic weight of the item during scanning.

32. (Currently amended) ~~The A~~ data reading system ~~of claim 30~~ for reading symbols on items passed through a scan volume by an operator, comprising

a housing;

a data reader disposed in the housing for reading a symbol on an item being passed through the scan volume, and for obtaining symbol orientation data and symbol movement data during scanning;

a processor integrated with the data reader for processing the symbol orientation data and the symbol movement data, and for determining an effectiveness of a scanning technique;

feedback means in communication with the processor for providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique,

wherein the feedback means comprises a visual feedback display located on the housing.

33. (Original) The data reading system of claim 32 wherein the visual feedback display comprises a module removably mounted on the housing.

34. (Currently amended) ~~The A~~ data reading system ~~of claim 30 further comprising~~ for reading symbols on items passed through a scan volume by an operator, comprising

a housing;

a data reader disposed in the housing for reading a symbol on an item being passed through the scan volume, and for obtaining symbol orientation data and symbol movement data during scanning;

a processor integrated with the data reader for processing the symbol orientation data and the symbol movement data, and for determining an effectiveness of a scanning technique;

feedback means in communication with the processor for providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique;

a camera for monitoring motion of the item during scanning.

35. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A data reading system of claim 30 for reading symbols on items passed through a scan volume by an operator, comprising

a housing;

a data reader disposed in the housing for reading a symbol on an item being passed through the scan volume, and for obtaining symbol orientation data and symbol movement data during scanning;

a processor integrated with the data reader for processing the symbol orientation data and the symbol movement data, and for determining an effectiveness of a scanning technique;

feedback means in communication with the processor for providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique,

wherein the feedback means comprises a printer for printing a scanning technique report.

36. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A data reading system of claim 30 for reading symbols on items passed through a scan volume by an operator, comprising

a housing;

a data reader disposed in the housing for reading a symbol on an item being passed through the scan volume, and for obtaining symbol orientation data and symbol movement data during scanning;

a processor integrated with the data reader for processing the symbol orientation data and the symbol movement data, and for determining an effectiveness of a scanning technique;

feedback means in communication with the processor for providing feedback indicating the effectiveness of the scanning technique,

wherein the feedback means comprises a video monitor for displaying scanning technique data.

37. (Previously presented) A method of optical scanning wherein an operator passes an item through a scan volume of a scanner while moving the item across a weigh scale integrated with the scanner, comprising the steps of

scanning an optical symbol on the item to obtain symbol data;

obtaining a dynamic weight of the item as the item is moved across the weigh scale;

calculating an average dynamic weight of a plurality of items scanned;

comparing the average dynamic weight of the plurality of items scanned to an average dynamic weight standard;

providing data regarding an extent of lifting to at least one of a training system and a monitoring system.

38. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 37 further comprising the step of monitoring scanning technique with the scanner to obtain scan technique data.

39. (Previously presented) A method of optical scanning wherein an operator passes an item through the scan volume of a scanner while moving the item across a weigh scale integrated with the scanner, comprising the steps of

scanning an optical symbol on the item to obtain symbol data;

obtaining a dynamic weight of the item as the item is moved across the weigh scale;

comparing the dynamic weight value to a threshold value to make a decision whether the item was slid across the scanner or lifted across the scanner;

accumulating total quantities of items slid and items lifted for a plurality of items scanned;

providing data regarding the relative amounts of lifting and of sliding to at least one of a training system and a monitoring system.

40. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 39 further comprising the step of monitoring scanning technique with the scanner to obtain scan technique data.

41. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing feedback comprises displaying performance data to the operator indicating effectiveness of the operator's reading technique.

42. (Previously presented) A data reading system according to claim 32 wherein the visual feedback display comprises a visual readout in a graphical display.

43. (Previously presented) A data reading system according to claim 42 wherein the graphical display comprises a bar-graph.

44. (Previously presented) A data reading system according to claim 30 wherein the feedback means comprises a color readout.

45. (Previously presented) A data reading system according to claim 30 wherein the feedback means includes a changing color display visible to the operator during operation, wherein the color that is displayed depends upon the effectiveness of the operating technique.

46. (Currently amended) A data reading system, comprising
a housing;
a reading device disposed in the housing for detecting an aspect of an item being moved through a detection volume of the device;

a weigh scale integrated with the reading device and disposed below the detection volume, the weigh scale being operative for detecting a partial weight of an item as it is moved thereacross;

means for ~~monitoring~~ reporting the partial weight of the item as an indication of operating technique of an operator as to how the operator moves items through the detection volume;

~~feedback means in communication with the monitoring means
for providing feedback on the operating technique.~~

47. (Previously presented) A data reading system,
comprising

a housing;

a reading device disposed in the housing for detecting an
aspect of an item being moved through a detection volume of the
device;

means for monitoring operating technique of an operator
moving items through the detection volume;

feedback means in communication with the monitoring means
for providing feedback on the operating technique,

wherein the feedback means comprises a visual feedback
display on the housing visible to the operator.

48. (Previously presented) A system according to claim 47
wherein the visual feedback display comprises a graphical
display.

49. (Currently amended) A data reading system, comprising
~~according to claim 46~~

a housing;

a reading device disposed in the housing for detecting an
aspect of an item being moved through a detection volume of the
device;

means for monitoring operating technique of an operator
moving items through the detection volume;

feedback means in communication with the monitoring means
for providing feedback on the operating technique,

wherein the reading device is selected from the group consisting of: optical reader, bar code reader, CCD imaging data reader, LED reader, CMOS imaging reader, RFID reader, an EAS deactivation device.

50. (Currently amended) A method for providing feedback to an operator at an item handling station including a weigh scale, comprising the steps of

monitoring an operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station by measuring a dynamic weight of an item being dragged across the weigh scale;

evaluating the operating technique;

providing feedback indicative of the operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station.

51. (Currently amended) A method ~~according to claim 50~~ further comprising for providing feedback to an operator at an item handling station, comprising the steps of

monitoring an operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station;

evaluating the operating technique;

providing feedback indicative of the operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station;

providing a visual display at the item handling station and displaying the feedback directly to the operator on the visual display.

52. (Currently amended) A method ~~according to claim 50~~ for providing feedback to an operator at an item handling station, comprising the steps of

monitoring an operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station;
evaluating the operating technique;
providing feedback indicative of the operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station,
wherein the step of evaluating the operating technique comprises determining an ergonomic performance of the operating technique and the step of providing feedback comprises indicating the ergonomic performance.

53. (Currently amended) A method ~~according to claim 50~~ for providing feedback to an operator at an item handling station, comprising the steps of
monitoring an operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station;
evaluating the operating technique;
providing feedback indicative of the operating technique by which the operator handles items at the item handling station,
wherein the item handling station comprises a device selected from the group consisting of: optical reader, bar code reader, CCD imaging data reader, LED reader, CMOS imaging reader, RFID reader, EAS deactivation device.

54. canceled

55. canceled

56. (Currently amended) A system for data reading, comprising

a data reader used by an operator for obtaining identification information from a label or tag on an item;

monitoring means for monitoring ergonomics of operating technique as the operator uses the data reader to read items;

feedback means in communication with the monitoring means for providing feedback of the ergonomics of the operating technique,

wherein the data reader is a device selected from the group consisting of: RFID reader, EAS deactivation device.

57. (Currently amended) A system for data reading,
~~according to claim 56~~ comprising

a data reader used by an operator for obtaining identification information from a label or tag on an item;

monitoring means for monitoring ergonomics of operating technique as the operator uses the data reader to read items;

feedback means in communication with the monitoring means for providing feedback of the ergonomics of the operating technique,

wherein the feedback means comprises a visual feedback display on the data reader visible to the operator.

58. (Previously presented) A system for data reading, comprising

a handheld data reader for obtaining identification information from a label on an item;

monitoring means for monitoring operating performance as an operator reads items with the handheld data reader, wherein the monitoring means determines a measured distance from the item

and compares the measured distance to an optimum reading distance;

feedback means in communication with the monitoring means for providing feedback of the operating performance directly to the operator.

59. (Previously presented) A system according to claim 58 wherein the handheld data reader includes a housing with a head portion and a handle portion, wherein feedback means comprises a visual feedback display on the head portion visible to the operator during operation.

60. (Previously presented) A method of operating a handheld data reader, comprising

monitoring operating performance as an operator reads items with a handheld data reader by determining a measured distance from the item and comparing the measured distance to an optimum reading distance;

providing feedback of the operating performance directly to the operator.

Claims 61-80 canceled

81. (New) A method of data reading comprising the steps of providing a data reader with first and second windows facing a read volume from different directions;

monitoring operating performance as an operator passes items through the read volume by determining and reporting which of the first and second windows accomplished reading of the item.

82. (New) A method according to claim 81 further comprising providing feedback of the operating performance directly to the operator.

83. (New) A method according to claim 81 further comprising comparing which window is determined to have accomplished reading of the item to which window constitutes an optimum read corresponding to the item.

84. (New) A method of operating a data reader, comprising the steps of

having an operator pass an item bearing an electronic tag through a detection volume;

monitoring movement of the item through the detection volume by repeatedly sensing for presence of the electronic tag;

providing feedback of operating technique pertaining to how the operator moves the item through the detection volume.

85. (New) A method according to Claim 84 further comprising

determining an approximate speed at which the item was moved through the detection volume by sensing how long the electronic tag was present in the detection volume.

86. (New) A method according to claim 84 wherein the data reader comprises a device selected from the group consisting of: optical reader, bar code reader, CCD imaging data reader, LED reader, CMOS imaging reader, RFID reader, EAS deactivation device.